



Power plant cleanup at midpoint

By AMY MCCULLOUGH Tribune Chronicle March 31, 2005, Online Edition

WARREN - The cleanup at the site of the old Mahoningside Power plant is about halfway done and on schedule, but the project may end up with a higher-than-expected price tag.

The longtime eyesore has been in limbo in recent years as local and federal officials have worked to clean up the site.

Mark Durno, on-site coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said an unexpectedly high count of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, a known carcinogen, will keep the project cost close to the allotted \$800,000 despite early estimates that fell below that figure.

The hydroelectric and coal-burning power plant, which operated from the early 1900s to the mid-1970s, was demolished by the city in 1999. Three large piles of dirt were found to be contaminated with PCBs, linked to the electrical equipment such as transformers and compressors.

The EPA moved into the site about a month ago, and Durno expects most of the work to be completed by the end of April.

About 1,500 tons of PCB regulated debris already has been disposed off-site, and an estimated 4,644 tons of asbestos regulated debris has been disposed, totaling about \$305,000. The estimated 6,100 tons of material shipped off site equals about 45 percent of the total contaminated material.

Durno said the PCB-regulated material will be shipped to a hazardous waste landfill in a Detroit suburb, and the asbestos regulated material will be shipped to Minerva Enterprises Inc. in Minerva.

Mayor Michael J. O'Brien said he plans to hold monthly news conferences so the public is aware of each issue or challenge that arises during the cleanup.

"The public is now little-by-little starting to observe what's going on at the site," he said. "I think it's important to share with the entire community the progress of Mahoningside."

Durno said preventing the spread of dust in the air is the biggest problem workers should face in the upcoming weeks as the weather continues to get nicer; however, he said pumps are continually wetting the piles to keep the dust from blowing, so it should not pose a threat to anyone in the immediate area.

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